



of conspiracy, one count of soliciting bribes, and one count of procuring or attempting to procure naturalization unlawfully.

During his guilty plea, ORTEGA admitted, "I accepted bribes from applicants seeking citizenship that could not speak, read or understand sufficient English to pass the English proficiency and United States history requirements," and "as a result of my conduct, many applicants were approved for citizenship that were not entitled."

In addition to the term of imprisonment, Judge KEENAN sentenced ORTEGA to forfeit \$50,000.

Seven of ORTEGA's ten co-defendants -- ALBERTO COLON, ANDREA PEGUERO SANTILLANA, BLAS ISRAEL DIAZ, JOSE LORA, BILERCA SANTANA, JOSE ALMONTE, and JAMLET GARCIA -- pleaded guilty to a charge of unlawfully procuring naturalization. OSCAR FABREGAS, a District Adjudications Officer with CIS, pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement relating to naturalization. The cases against RAFAELINA PICHARDO and DIAULICIA CABA are pending.

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, stated, "Jimmie Ortega sold United States citizenship to immigrants who did not qualify for it. In doing so, he violated the trust of his country, abused his position of power, and corrupted the process by which immigrants earn citizenship."

Mr. GARCIA thanked the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General's Office for their work in the investigation.

This case is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys CHRISTINE Y. WONG and MARCUS A. ASNER are in charge of the prosecution.

08-07

###